

CORRESPONDENCE.

Written for this Paper.

IN OKLAHOMA.

As the hand on the clock indicated 8 a. m. we loaded our effects in a little spring wagon and bade goodby to our friends at our southern Indian home, Sulphur Springs, Chickasaw Nation, Indian territory. Elders Collet and Davis accompanied their Salt Lake friends to Davis, the railroad station, ten miles distant. As our team moved off in their customary slow and unsteady gait, pulling our wagon by "plow gears," chain-tug harness, with collar and back strap only, and no brake to steady our easy-running wagon, we found ourselves under the necessity of holding fast as we went slam-bang in the creek and low places. We rolled over the prairie and here and there through a skirt of timber, down in a hollow, up on a hill, where, commanding a view of the country, we could see before us an ocean, as it were, of land, as it reached out in its broad expanse far as the eye could reach.

Our teamster was a good old-fashioned Christian of the Campbellite persuasion. He, with the Elders, were entertained by the reading from Church history by Bro. K. who read aloud on the subject of the early rise of the Church. When the period was reached where Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Aaronic Priesthood, a discussion on authority ensued, which terminated with the good-bye shake several miles distant. Strange, is it not? that our Christian friends still hang to the imaginary authority they claim to have received from Christ, when, in His divine injunction to His Apostles, He, said: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," and "go ye therefore and teach all nations." When our respected teamster became confused on this point, he then clung to the descent of authority, which of course was upset again by the apostasy. Here the good old brother was lost at sea, and when John's Revelation concerning "another angel" that was to fly in the midst of heaven, bringing the everlasting Gospel was sprung on him he replied, "Now you've got me—all good natured of course, and an expression of desire to learn more of the good things we preached and practiced, avowing that if he could find we were right he would make the transfer.

The Chickasaw country is much lower and correspondingly warmer than Oklahoma, and as the Elders parted with their visitor at the depot, the train pulled out and commenced a gradual ascent, finally crossing the Canadian river, which, by the way, is the dividing line between our Indian land and the new prospective state of Oklahoma. At about the middle of their "beautiful land" (meaning of the word Oklahoma), we cross the backbone at about fourteen hundred feet, while at the Springs it cannot be more than nine hundred. The altitude of the country averages probably one thousand feet above the sea. Here and there, irregularly located on the creek bottoms, by a clump of timber or on a

prairie, we see dotted the Indian homes and their farms cultivated by their white renters.

Now we have crossed the bridge, we are on the surveyed lands of the newly-opened Territory of Oklahoma, which can be readily seen by the regularly laid off lands, the roads, the houses and farms. The towns and cities as we find them are springing up like magic—a wilderness but four and a half years ago, now teeming with vegetation and humanity. We have passed several cities of no small proportions, towns here and there, and on every quarter except school lands, a farm house.

Oklahoma City is called by the brakeman, and the train stops at the second city of the new territory, containing 10,000 inhabitants. Down below the level of the prairie in a bend of the north fork of the Canadian river, nearly surrounded by trees growing on the fertile bottom land of this stream; and on the north and east, on the rolling hills of the prairie, is the bustling little commercial city of Oklahoma. There are several prominent streets of respectable wealth, built up on either side with substantial business blocks two and three stories high, of native stone and brick—banks and mercantile establishments, up to modern cities of twenty years' standing; while in the suburbs are many costly and beautiful dwellings. The city is lighted by electricity and accommodated with water works; it has its manufactures and other modern developments. The Santa Fe train pulls out of the depot and leaves more people standing on the platform than are generally seen at one time in a body these days. The cars are filled, the air is balmy, the weather dry, bright and beautiful—so warm we have to open the car windows for ventilation.

We pass several cities of ordinary railroad town size, and now reach Norman, the highest elevation, whence we descend, coming north still towards the Kansas line, still passing towns and cities, and as far as the feeble eye can survey out over the vast prairie are farms and houses to be seen. A stream of water is crossed; we pass through a skirt of timber reaching from the west to the east till it widens out into the great timbered country of the civilized tribes.

We are now at Guthrie, the metropolis. Fully two hundred people are on the platform, hurrying to and fro; cabs, hacks and wagons are loaded, the streets are thronged, the people are dispersed. The change is made and the train is gone. To the east the city lies on a rise of ground with quite a steep ascent from the railroad track; while west it gradually descends to the Cottonwood—a small river running through the west side of the city; while curving well to the west and north is the Red fork of the Arkansas or Cimmon river. Unlike Oklahoma city, Guthrie is situated on an open bleak prairie among the rolling rough hills of the broken country. Fifteen thousand people live here, who enjoy equal if not superior advantages over the commercial city on the south. Wholesale establishments,

manufacturers, other business houses, fine residences, a progressive city—all are here. "These cities are built to stay," said a business man from New York who was erecting a large block, and the surrounding country warrants the statement, unless perchance a cyclone sweeps them away, for such things are known in this country. Not more than four farmers as yet are occupying one section of land. What may be said of the country when five times the present population carry their produce to the cities!

We are now at Orlando, the last city in Oklahoma proper, from which point the greatest rush was made into the Cherokee Strip, which was opened up September 16th of this year, on the train which carried in thousands. We could see on either side the rough, rolling country where for ten miles men and women on horseback kept pace with the train in the mad rush for lots in Perry, the prospective city of the Strip. In three hours not less than 30,000 people were on the spot, and filing on the small lots staked out by the United States surveyor. Two sections are covered by this giant infant of modern times. Tents and rude shanties are being displaced by better and more substantial structures. Order is being established out of confusion. During Perry's early days, they averaged three men in two days killed. There are about 6,200 claims in all, and 5,000 people located; it will take about three years to clear up the contests now standing on them. There were 110 saloons and 500 lawyers at one time. Of course their number has been reduced now to about half. There are about twenty-eight lumber yards, and judging from the thousands of lumber shanties and houses sprung up in the last ninety days, they must have done a rushing business. There are at least sixty-two grocery stores, and of course others in proportion. Business lots of small proportions have changed hands already for a consideration of from \$300 to \$2000, and residence property at half of that amount. Not less than four daily newspapers are in existence, three of which are Democratic. John Brogan was elected mayor on October 21. He and a Democratic council run the municipal machinery. Perry, now hardly one hundred days old, has 20,000 inhabitants, and is becoming somewhat conservative. They don't kill quite so many men per day, claims are being settled, and things generally are assuming a normal condition.

Continuing along this branch of the Santa Fe, as also another line of the same road forty miles west, and on the Rock Island in the western part of the Strip, are other towns and cities, while on almost every quarter section of land a farmer has located. Six months having been provided on which to make final proof, the settlers mostly have gone home during the winter. There was possibly an average of from four to six claimants for every piece of land and as the prior rights are being proved, the population temporarily is being reduced.

In accordance with the organic act in the establishment of Oklahoma, all lands of the Indians opened for settlement subsequently were to belong to Oklahoma proper. With the new ad-